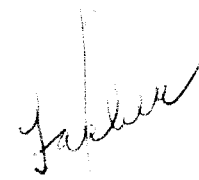


Copy to be forwarded from New York

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THE CHILDREN'S CANCER  
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

August 19, 1955

Mrs. Mary Lasker  
Gritti Palace  
Venice, Italy

Dear Mary:

Please forgive a typed letter. My handwriting is too far gone to be deciphered. I appreciated very much your good letter and hope that the European tour has been everything you desired. There is unfortunately no happy news to report about the growth hormone in acute leukemia. We have not had enough of it to give it a fair trial. A few patients to whom it was given showed no response which we could ascribe to the growth hormone, except continued survival beyond the point we would have thought possible. We must use adequate quantities to permit ourselves a fair evaluation.

I am awaiting news from C. H. who promised before he went away to have more material by the end of the month. I shall keep you informed.

We have started our new program with Gregory Pincus. I can't tell you how pleased I am that you brought the two of us together. He was here the other day for a conference. I am looking forward to good results from this collaboration.

John Fogarty phoned me from Providence to let me know that he had accepted two invitations to speak in behalf of the Jimmy Fund. (A trustee who lives in Providence and who is a supporter of John's apparently invited him to perform this gracious act). He is starting off for a 5-6 weeks tour of Europe. When he returns he told me he will accept my invitation to have dinner with me in Boston so that we may discuss the problems of mutual interest, at leisure.

I have been in constant touch with Ken Endicott and the National Chemotherapy program. I do believe that the organizational pattern is developing at a much more rapid rate than I could have hoped. It nevertheless seems frightfully slow. It sometimes becomes monotonous to see more and more men brought into the program go through the joys of discovering America.

The enthusiasm, however, of these new friends of chemotherapy is refreshing and seems to be on a genuine foundation.

The two million dollars has dwindled to a disturbingly small amount after the June commitments and the extra overhead percentage were taken away. Approximately \$900,000 had been set aside for contracts.

I am going to Washington on the 23rd for conferences with Endicott, Van Slyke, and other people in the chemotherapy program to see if I can help unravel some of the tangles and help make new plans. The Screening Panel will meet the 29th and 30th at New London, New Hampshire at the Gordon Cancer Conference. Great progress has been made by Harry Eagle in Bethesda and George Foley here in the growth of human tumors in Eagle's new medium. It is not yet ready for mass screening but may well prove to be the method for which we have been searching.

The other panels will be meeting in mid-September. We have set a date for the cancer chemotherapy national committee. I have called the meeting for New York on October 21st, which I have been told is convenient for you. All of the panels will have had a chance to meet sufficiently to have recommendations to present to the National Committee. Earlier than that, however, I think it will be quite important to have a meeting of the Sub-Committee of the National Advisory Cancer Council. We shall try to arrange for a time sometime during the week of 19th of September.

Our staff at what is now called by them the Cancer Chemotherapy National Service Center I know will appreciate knowing the wishes of the Sub-Committee. We will have to have someone to take the place of Dr. DeCoursey who has left the Council and has gone, as you know to San Antonio. Dr. Ravdin has been mentioned, particularly since he is the Chairman of the Clinical Panel.

I have just learned that Dr. Robert Moore, formerly Dean and Professor of Pathology, Washington University, St. Louis, and presently Vice-Chancellor in charge of the Health Schools at the University of Pittsburgh, has been appointed to the Cancer Council. I have not heard of any other appointments. Dr. Moore spent several hours with me the other evening in discussion of the Council and the Cancer Chemotherapy Program in particular. Dr. Moore is noted particularly for his administrative decorum and committee participation. He is a man of integrity and courage, has not done any cancer research but does have a good understanding of the pathologic basis of cancer.

Waksman's Actinomycin D appears to have its greatest effect upon the rhabdomyosarcoma, which is one of the most malignant tumors we have. We have not yet been able to achieve in man what we had hoped from the mouse work but we are still working. We reviewed just today the extraordinary effectiveness of Actinomycin D followed by nitromen (A Japanese milder relative of nitrogen mustard) on the extensive destructive lesions of the skeleton of a one year old child caused by an angiosarcoma. The massive destructive lesions have melted away during the last three months of treatment and the baby has actually learned to walk during that period. We are trying the combination as rapidly as we can in other equally disturbing situations.

We feel somewhat more happy too because of developments in another part of our program--a new class of pyrimidines synthesized five years ago and since then by several other industrial laboratories have been on the shelf as chemicals unstudied during this time. We re-discovered them here a year ago, and since none of the industrial laboratories had published we were unaware of their works. We found them to have strong anti-folic and anti-purine activity. One of my younger colleagues, Dr. Edward Modest has just returned from the International Biochemical Congress in Brussels. There he learned that some of Haddow's men had studied these compounds and found them to be anti-folic in activity. They had not looked for anti-purine activity. This group of pyrimidines now has assumed biological importance in experimental cancer chemotherapy. We have been pushing ahead as fast as possible during the last several months in our biological studies but have not yet reached man. In action they seem to combine the virtues of aminopterin and 6-mercaptopurine. I am always pleased when discoveries are made in two institutions far apart at about the same time. This saves so much time in confirmation of work.

The polio situation in Boston has remained in the state of a moderate epidemic. Our hospital has been filled and we have had 8 deaths so far. This combined with the hottest summer in history has made going a little tough but our splendid staff has carried on in a surprisingly effective manner under bad conditions.

I had not intended to make this a scientific treatise. The hour is very late, Mrs. McGachie is long suffering, and the psychiatrists call this catharsis. All of us are looking forward to your return. With all good wishes for a happy remainder of your stay, I am -

Sincerely yours

